

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: I.

Date: April 27, 2007

Topic: First Review of a Request for Increased Graduation Requirements from Waynesboro Public Schools

Presenters: Dr. Robin Crowder, Superintendent, Waynesboro Public Schools
Ms. Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications

Telephone Number: (804) 225-2403 E-Mail Address: Anne.Wescott@doe.virginia.gov

Origin:

☐ Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

☒ Board review required by
☐ State or federal law or regulation
☒ Board of Education regulation
☐ Other: _____

☐ Action requested at this meeting ☒ Action requested at future meeting: May 30, 2007

Previous Review/Action:

☒ No previous board review/action

☐ Previous review/action
date _____

Background Information:

The Standards of Quality (SOQ), in § 22.1-253.13:4 of the *Code of Virginia*, require local school boards to "...award diplomas to all secondary school students, including students who transfer from nonpublic schools or from home instruction, who earn the units of credit prescribed by the Board of Education, pass the prescribed tests, and meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the local school board and approved by the Board of Education."

Standard 8 VAC 20-131-50 of the *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia* (Standards of Accreditation) addresses graduation requirements. The regulation says, in part: "The requirements for a student to earn a diploma and graduate from a Virginia high school shall be those in effect when that student enters the ninth grade for the first time. Students shall be awarded a diploma upon graduation from a Virginia high school.... The following requirements shall be the only requirements for a diploma, unless a local school board has prescribed additional requirements that have been approved by the Board of Education. All additional requirements prescribed by local school boards that have been approved by the Board of Education, remain in effect until such time as the local school board submits a request to amend or discontinue them...."

The Board's *Guidance Document Governing Certain Provisions of the Regulations Establishing Standards of Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia*, adopted by the Board on October 26, 2006, gives school divisions guidance in prescribing additional credit requirements for the Standard and Advanced Studies diplomas. The guidance document says, in part:

Standard Diploma: Generally, the Board will approve requests from local school divisions to require up to two additional local credits to obtain the Standard Diploma, up to a maximum of 24 required credits. Generally, the Board will approve local requests for additional graduation credit requirements in the core discipline areas of the Standards of Learning (English, mathematics, science or history/social science).... Requests for additional local credits in disciplines outside the core discipline areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Advanced Studies Diploma: Generally, the Board will approve requests from local school divisions for local additional credits required for the Advanced Studies Diploma above the 24 contained in the standards if the credits are in the discipline areas of English, mathematics, science, history/social studies, fine arts (including performing arts), career and technical education, or foreign language. The Board will consider credits outside these disciplines on a case-by-case basis.

Transfer Students: Any local school division receiving approval to increase its course credit requirements may not deny either the Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma to any transfer student who has otherwise met the requirements contained in the standards, if the transfer student can only meet the division's requirements by taking a heavier than normal course load in any semester, by taking summer school, or by taking courses after the time when he or she otherwise would have graduated.

Prospective Application / Advance Notice: A local school division's additional credit requirements should apply only to students who have not yet entered ninth grade at the time the additional credits are approved.

Allocation of Electives: Generally the Board will approve requests from local school divisions to allocate elective credits for local prescribed course requirements, while reducing the number of electives by an equal amount so that the total number of graduation credit requirements remains unchanged....

Summary of Major Elements:

Waynesboro Public Schools is requesting approval to require students to have successfully completed a course in finance, incorporating the Board's objectives in economic education and financial literacy. The student could complete either a full year, credit bearing course from the finance concentration sequence in Career and Technical Education, for which the student would earn a standard credit. As an alternative, if the student has sufficient credits for graduation, the student could complete a shorter, online course, which would also be based on the finance concentration sequence in Career and Technical Education. Transfer students could also take advantage of the online option. Students choosing the online option would not earn a standard credit for successfully completing this course.

This requirement would become effective for the students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year, as specified in both the Standards of Accreditation and the guidance document.

Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board accept for first review Waynesboro City Public School's request to increase graduation requirements.

Impact on Resources: There is no impact on resources at the Department of Education.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: This request will be presented to the Board of Education for final review and approval on May 30. Department of Education staff will notify the school division of the Board's action.

Waynesboro Public Schools

301 Pine Avenue
Waynesboro, Virginia 22980

Phone (540) 946-4600
Fax (540) 946-4608

DIVISION OF POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS

MAR 21 2007

March 16, 2007

Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jr.
Virginia Department of Education
PO Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Dr. Cannaday:

Waynesboro Public Schools is requesting approval for a graduation requirement in Finance for all students. The Department of Education's required objectives in economics education and financial literacy form the curriculum for our new course. Waynesboro Public Schools believes strongly that these objectives are critical for our students to be able to make informed choices as they move on from our programs.

We plan to deliver this information in two formats, either of which would meet our graduation requirement. First, students could enroll in a full-year Finance credit-bearing course based on the Career and Technical course code 6120. We anticipate that many seniors who have already met graduation requirements and do not have full course loads would choose this option. An online option will also be available for students who do not have room in their schedules for a full course, or who want to opt for other electives during their regular school day. The online course will be a shorter program, will not earn credit, and will be based on the CTE course number 6121.

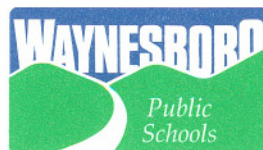
We are requesting approval of these two options as graduation requirements for our students. Students will not be required to earn increased credits for graduation.

We look forward to answering any additional questions you or the State Board of Education may have concerning our request.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robin Crowder
Superintendent



Our Children...Our Future...Our Responsibility